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STAFF NOTES:

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WESTERN EUROPE — CANADA — INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Western Europe Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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French Communist Trade Union Confederation
Emphasizes Link to Communist Labor
International

The French communist-dominated Confederation Generale du Travail (CGT) continues to play up its close relationship with the communist-controlled labor international, the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), despite the negative impact this has on its bid to join the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).

Last week the democratic trade union confederation--the Confederation Generale du Travail-Force Ouvriere (CGT-FO)--celebrated the founding of the CGT in 1895. It continues to assert that it, rather than the CGT as now composed, is the true heir of the founding organization. The original CGT was taken over by its communist leaders in 1947; the non-communists subsequently pulled out to form the FO. The FO celebrations revive for the public memories of the communists' unethical tactics at that time and draw an implicit parallel with communist strategy in current communist-socialist disputes in France and Portugal. The CGT has, almost perforce, been compelled to reverse its policy of ignoring the anniversary.

CGT Secretary General Georges Seguy told a US Embassy officer last week that the most important event in the CGT's anniversary program will be a WFTU General Council meeting in Paris this October. This will be the second time that the government has permitted a major WFTU meeting in France since it forced it to move its headquarters from Paris in 1951.

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Seguy said that the government has not yet replied either to a 1973 WFTU request to move its permanent headquarters back to Paris, or to an application in early 1974 to locate the WFTU metalworkers' department there. There is no recent information available to the Embassy on Paris' current attitude on this matter. However, the authorization for the General Council session may presage a favorable response to the other applications.

The CGT's relationship with WFTU is a major roadblock to its bid to join the ETUC, and ETUC President Hans Vetter was authorized in February to tell Seguy that the application would not be further considered as long as the CGT retains full membership in WFTU. The Seguy-Vetter meeting has been twice postponed and, according to Seguy at least, both were last-minute cancellations by Vetter. Although the unanimous ETUC Presidium decision would imply a consensus, European trade unions are in fact sharply divided over the matter. The Germans and the Belgians strongly oppose CGT membership and the British, the Italian communist confederation, and some Scandinavian unions support it.

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the CGT would never change its WFTU status in order to accommodate the ETUC. Moreover, [REDACTED] boasted that such a change was not even necessary, as persistence would wear down opposition within the ETUC to CGT affiliation. (Secret No Foreign Dissem/No Dissem Abroad/Background Use Only/Controlled Dissem)

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Yugoslav and Romanian Reactions to Italian Elections

News media in Yugoslavia and Romania have predictably hailed the electoral gains of the independent-minded Italian Communist Party in last week's regional elections. Belgrade and Bucharest expect the Italian party will now be an even stronger ally in resisting Soviet pressure to dominate preparations for the European Communist conference.

Radio Belgrade on June 19 depicted the PCI's gains as the logical outcome for a party that rejected foreign models (read Moscow) and convinced voters that it is a national party seeking Italian solutions to Italian problems. The PCI's victories, according to Belgrade, prove that national Communist parties have a legitimate role to play in tackling the specific circumstances facing each country. The Yugoslavs flatly reject any notion that Italy's economic problems are the key to the PCI's successes. Indeed, Belgrade asserts that the Italian Communists have achieved their victory because they have rejected blind obedience to others (again read Moscow), and have offered cooperation on an equal footing with all parties to the left.

The Romanians have been even more effusive in praising the PCI. An article in the party daily on June 19 gave full marks to the Italian Communist's "creativity," and "ability to adapt revolutionary theories to specific, unique problems." Bucharest also cited the wisdom of the PCI in cooperating with democratic and progressive forces in Italy--the Socialists, Social Democrats, and the broad masses of Catholics.

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Spanish Prime Minister Reaffirms His Political Program

In a major speech to the Spanish parliament on Tuesday, Prime Minister Arias tried to placate his critics on both the left and right by stressing the need for law and order, as well as further political development, but neither group is likely to be fully satisfied.

Arias devoted much of his speech to Prince Juan Carlos, General Franco's designated heir, than to Franco, but he shed no light on when the transfer of power would take place. Arias thus disappointed the many Spaniards who have been calling for Franco to step down. The extensive praise for Juan Carlos may have been intended as a slap against the Prince's father, Don Juan of Borbon, who recently renewed his claim to the throne.

The Prime Minister pointed to the outlawed Communists as the greatest obstacle to a smooth transition after Franco goes. He announced that before the end of the year, he would send the parliament a special draft law on fighting communism. The law probably means harsh police action against the Communists and their allies in the underground trade union movement and in the Communist-dominated Democratic Junta, which was formed in Paris last July and now operates clandestinely in Spain.

Arias also condemned separatist movements, especially those in the troubled northern Basque provinces. He defended the state of emergency imposed on two Basque provinces on April 25 that gives the police additional powers, and he did

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not indicate when the emergency decree would be lifted. He sounded a conciliatory note, however, saying his government is looking at regional development plans that could meet some separatist grievances.

The Prime Minister singled out the armed forces for special praise for their "serene, sober, and well-balanced attitude" and their recognition that one of their highest missions is to guarantee the protection of the present institutions of government and order. He also credited the armed forces for exercising "prudence and courage" in the Sahara by not giving in to provocations and threats--his only reference to foreign affairs in the entire speech.

Arias spoke again of wider participation in government through creation of political associations. Admitting that the project had aroused opposition, Arias announced he would remove some restrictions on associations and will permit them to participate in the parliamentary election this fall. This measure is blunted, however, by the fact that only one fifth of the 565 members are elected by direct vote.

Arias cited the appointment last week of Jose Solis Ruiz as minister-secretary general of the National Movement as a boost for associationism, noting that Solis was an early active promoter of associations. Arias can take little other comfort from the appointment. Solis, an ambitious politician, who has been mentioned as a future prime minister, reportedly was appointed by Franco against Arias' wish.
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